2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

strike out with his adherents to found a new village. A sum of £6 or £7 is a considerable amount in everyday Yao life where the annual cash income of the average individual is not much more. The leader of a dissident group is prepared to forgo this wealth to get one foot on to the lowest rung of the political ladder—that is by becoming a village headman.

Obversely there is a great deal of sentiment attached to the idea of a united village. To the Yao way of thinking a village is broken by fighting or death, and these evils are linked by witchcraft beliefs. The associations of death and the break-up of the village is brought out clearly by the funeral ablutions of villagers after the burial of one of their number. An important ingredient in the medicine with which the mourners wash themselves after the funeral, is *chala*. It is the earth from a particular type of termitary which is usually about 12 to 18 inches high, upright and almost cylindrical. The crust is very brittle and it is comparatively easy to chip off a piece. When this is done a mass of internal chambers and passages is revealed. The soldier ants, unlike those of other species that retreat into the darkness of their passages as soon as they are exposed, come into the open daylight and swarm in confusion over the fractured termitary. When I questioned my informant about *chala*, he kicked the crust off the top of one of the hills and said, 'See all the houses in the village of the ants? I have broken their village. So it is with death. It breaks the village.'

The Yao believe that death 'breaks the village' and that conflicts through sorcery lead to death. Therefore, conflicts are the real cause of village splits. Hence differences must be settled immediately if the village is to persist, because if they last too long one of the aggrieved parties is sure to start using sorcery against its opponents. Those who do move away, go to a distant place because they believe that sorcery operates only where there is social interaction. But the fear of sorcery on the other hand is just as strong a force in maintaining the physical unity of the village. It is while the migration is being planned that sorcery is most likely to be used. This is particularly so if the village break is taking the form of a lineage split. This happened, for example, in Lupunje village.

Kalambo, the sister's son of Lupunje, wanted to leave the village and had gone to seek a suitable site. When he returned he found that

one of Mukonyi's sons died, after giving birth to quintuplets, some thirty years ago. Deformed children are buried alive. A large number of children is always hoped for and where polygamy is practised, some families are of considerable size, although the mortality among young children is very high. It is, of course, very difficult to state the child-bearing period among natives. It does not start as early as is commonly supposed, and I think the conception is found within about the same limits as among Europeans.

Death. Mukwa of Nyambani live to a good old age. That such is not the case I have found to be one of the many fallacious beliefs concerning natives which should be relegated to the realm of nephelokokkygia, as I have pointed out elsewhere.[1]

Death in old age is recognized as a natural event but apart from this, all sickness and death were formerly and are still to a large extent looked upon as the result of the machinations of some person, an idea which forms the outstanding feature in their belief in witchcraft, sorcery.[2]

Here I shall mention the ordinary customs in the case of death. During the last hours of a mortal illness, a man is tended by his wife or wives, the head wife also constantly supporting his head on her lap or against her breast. A woman is similarly tended by her mother, sisters, and friends. As unconsciousness sets in and the extremities become cold, they say, "His spirit has gone and only the heart remains alive."

The native does not like the idea of lingering on and a man on his death-bed will say to his sons, "How weirdly me that I die quickly." He may take medicine to help him over that time or he may give his sons instructions as to what to do. Should a man linger unconscious for a long time, friends will ask his sons, "Did he give you any instructions?" If he has done so, the sons will then carry them out. This perhaps consists of bathing themselves in medicine left by their father, while they stand on the roof of his house. Sometimes, the natives say of a lingering man, "Ah, perhaps he has eaten of a tortoise's heart!" Knowing the phenomenon of the tortoise's heart and believing that by partaking of it, the same property can be conferred on the heart of a man.

When death is manifest, the body is covered with a cloth by a brother, a son, or some other person in attendance. The eyes are closed, the mouth shut, and at the present time, the body straightened out. This, however, is a recent practice copied from the Anyanja, Europeans, and Mohammedans.

News of the death must be sent to the chief, and a messenger goes to his village where the chief and his people sit in the village open space. He carries a fowl in his hand. The present of a single fowl conveys decisive bad tidings. One of the chief's men, seeing the stranger approach with the single fowl, will jump up and take the bird. He is joined by the others and they go away to the cross-roads where they kill the fowl, pluck it, cook it and eat it. In the meantime, the messenger delivers his news to the chief who will produce from his house about eight yards of white calico; if the deceased has been a much respected

[1] Hugh D. Stannus, "The Wakonyo of nephew", *Zambesi*, April 11, 1914, p. 1000. [2] Vide infra, p. 388.

9: Seamus D-5 (ca. 1918) 1982 PTT Tue PTT

against all evils — witchcraft, attack by lions, etc. The element does not almost building 881
shelters in which the mali will remain during their term of instruction. According to the
number of the mali or the number of places where shelters are built may vary from one, two,
or three, to as many as eight. Each of these places is called *N'dapalo*. They may be many [394]
miles apart and are so placed for the convenience of the mothers in various groups of villages
who bring the food daily to the group of boys from those villages.

The boys when they originally left the village were wearing a large bark-cloth covering,
with beads and collar, which latter articles have been taken by the *m'mishilo* and his as-
sistants. At *N'dapalo* they wear simply a loin-cloth of bark.

During their stay at *N'dapalo*, the mali are given animal names by the element who [333]
carry on the instruction of the boys until their return to *Lupembe*, the *m'mishilo* having
gone back to his village immediately after the circumcision. The names given to the boys [551]
are commonly names of beasts of prey such as *Alibale* (*libale* = the jackal), *Ankhwele*
(*khwezi* = the leopard), etc.

Certain restrictions as to diet are laid upon the mali by the *m'mishilo*, e.g. no meat of 88/
an animal killed by a beast of prey, no monkey, chameleon. He will not allow any villager 264
to visit *N'dapalo* after seven p.m. and visitors may only be men who have been through the
ceremony. An uncircumcised man is called *mkalale*, one who has not been to his *Unyago*.

Other restrictions as to foodstuffs may be made by the element, generally in connection
with the mythical origin of such food substances. A finger-shaped yam called *kyata* is
taboo, as it is said to have first sprung from the grave of a leper, the leprosy being obvious.
After the *Unyago*, the boys have to undergo a special doctoring before they may partake of
them. Bananas and rice are absolutely refused them, the latter on account of a story to the
effect that rice grew from the nostrils of a dead man, the idea doubtless having relation to
the resemblance of rice grains to maggots. Fish is denied them by some masters of cere- [825]
monies, as it is said to have originated from the finger of a woman which she threw away
while fishing.

Each *m'mishilo* may have special observances of his own. One near Kondoa roasted all
manner to be roasted in a certain way. Rows of pieces of manera were placed in split [252]
bamboo spits and so roasted before the fire in the manner of fish. If roasted in the ordinary
way, the manera would split and show the white floury material inside, disliked by the
mali kwa-ligala. If this is eaten by the mali, it is said that the prepucial wound reopen.

The length of time spent at *N'dapalo* varies from four weeks to as long as three or four 881
months. In the first place they must wait till the circumcision wounds of all are com-
pletely healed. Delay may be occasioned by complications having arisen in some cases.
Again, permission to return may be withheld by the chief for some reason or other.
Should one of the mali die at *N'dapalo*, the body is buried out in the bush and nothing [764]
is said to the parents until after the ceremonies are over and all have returned to the
village.

3: Oceanic D-5 (no. 1913) 1932 FT? Tau FT?

or after the return to the village. The boys often wear all their headwork and new cloth for several days; after carrying their sponge for a similar period, they give them up to their elders. Together they go into the bush where they break up their wands and put them either into a pit or in the forked branch of a tree. Before the ni'mbiblo leaves, he brings to the chief all his takings and these are divided between them.

Mention has been made above of the tapaga and it now remains to consider them more fully. The figures vary in subject, in number and in arrangement. At the ceremony at Komineme's, the following were arranged in a long line beginning with the whale and ending with the python before *shing'undong'unga* (Pl. X, fig. 2).

1. *Nakaupani* ..... the whale (Pl. XI, fig. 7).
2. *Ngoma* ..... the crocodile (Pl. XII, fig. 6).
3. *Chimi* ..... the leopard (Pl. XII, fig. 5).
4. *Mbanda* ..... the zebra (Pl. X, fig. 6).
5. *Ngoko* ..... the scaly anteater (Pl. XII, fig. 2).
6. *Nkamanda* ..... the hippopotamus (Pl. XII, fig. 4).
7. *Kanga* (unknown?) ..... (Pl. X, fig. 5).
8. *Mbalagi* ..... the white antelope (Pl. XI, fig. 8).
9. *W'akangwa wa shikawa kukula* ..... the women dead in child-birth (Pl. XIII, fig. 3).
10. *Lguana* ..... the sun (Pl. XI, fig. 4).
11. *Likalam* ..... the caterpillar (Pl. XII, fig. 6).
12. *Mbala* ..... the plaice (Pl. XI, fig. 6).
13. *Likwamanda* ..... a kind of shrub (Pl. XI, fig. 5).
14. *Ngwai* ..... the lightning-lizard (Pl. XIII, fig. 4).
15. *Bakala* ..... the iguana (Pl. XII, fig. 4).
16. *M'wadu* ..... the man (Pl. XIII, fig. 1).
17. *Lngulum* ..... the wild pig (Pl. XI, fig. 1).
18. *Sungula* ..... the hare (Pl. XI, fig. 3).
19. *Kale* ..... the python (Pl. XIII, fig. 5).

Beside these, *Ngoma*, the lake, nearly always appears;[1] *Mwezi*, the moon, the drunken women, and certain animals may be represented, and in addition, shinde, "the dwelling place of all the old spirits." Each particular ni'mbiblo has his favorite figures about which he sings, always accompanying, however, with the whale.

Reproduced here is the series of tapaga at Komineme's village sketched at the time of my visit. It seems probable that originally the same set of figures was always reproduced. It is hard to trace their significance with any certainty. Natives aver that they are made only for instructional purposes. "The animals are made so that the boys may recognize them, while some of the other figures have reference to customs." They deny the more in-

[1] Cf. Hocart and Joyce, 'The initiation ceremony for boys among the Tau of Nyasaland,' op. cit., Pl. III, fig. 2.

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learning possibility of a totemic origin and it is, of course, true that at the present time the Yao have few clan names referring to animals and practically no clan food taboos.

At Mlanyanja's village in September 1935, I saw the image figures being made. The long grass was cleared away and the earth heaped up into heaps, roughly of the shape and size of the figures to be made. A number of women were employed carrying water from the stream with which the mounds were well moistened and moulded into more definite form. The outlines of the figures were then drawn in, all by one elderly man, with flour measured on by hand. In drawing *nalumpumi*, it was interesting to note how the efforts to keep to symmetry failed.

Of *nguwo*, *chisi*, *ngoko*, *nakumanda*, *mkalapi*, *mkoto*, *liputowo*, *mtu*, I have little to add; the well are told of their habits, whether they are good to eat, whether they are dangerous, etc.; and all the stories about them. *Mkanda*, the zebra, is always represented in duplicate for some unknown reason. *Nungulo* is pointed out in reference to a story the boys have been told at *Nikapulo*, namely, that the hare is good to eat but they must not eat it till after they are married and their wives have borne children; otherwise they will be childless. The superstition regarding the hare is continued elsewhere. *Njoni* is the hypothetical lizard-like animal which lives above the clouds and is seen as lightning. *Likombo* is a cloth which the Yao used to wear. In the presence of his chief, a man must not throw a fold over his shoulder. *Mbale*, the plain, refers to the chief's plain from which he rule. *Likolwe*: It is said that the old people used to eat scorpions and the people of Mangoche, Amangoche Yao, used to call the Amachinga Yao the "*Mikolwe* eaters." *Lipwa* is the sun, the giver of daytime. *Wakongwe* is a representation of a pregnant woman who has died childless because her husband was unfaithful. This is a well recognized superstition and one among others of equal moral value, introduced into the *yaotha* during their stay at *Nikapulo*. Though rough, *nalumpumi* is a very realistic figure. The woman is evidently lying down, as one hand supports the head, the other hand grasps the thigh as if she were in pain; the breasts are made large and the figure being in relief, the prominent abdomen, and expanded umbilicus are noticeable features. The face and genitals are modelled in clay and superimposed on the earth figure; a maize cob stalk is placed in the anus to counterpart the nalo-button worn by women.

In contradiction to *nalumpumi*, *mamba* is symbolic of the man who has led a proper life and is blessed with a child. The child is shown on one side. On his other side is seen a conventional illustration of a spear, possibly to indicate that the figure is that of a man. I am not very sure about *Kanga*; it may be meant for *nalonga*, the woman who officiates at *Likisa*; there is nothing about the figure to suggest a woman and I could learn nothing concerning it.

Nakumpumi: There appears to be some difference of opinion about this animal. Formerly I accepted the translation given by Scott,[1] namely, the whale. Others have supposed

[1] David Clement Scott, 'A syllabic dictionary of the Mang'anja Language,' Edinburgh, 1892, p. viii.

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that the word refers to some large animal which lived or may still live in the big lakes. The older natives say of mulongwesi that "it lived in the big sea at Zanzibar. It would come and lie on the surface of the water, maybe near a village; then the people would go down and eat heaps of meat all without its knowledge; the wounds healed up immediately. Meat from different parts differed; some was nasty to taste. It was a very large animal indeed and never lived in the lakes." They distinguish it from *kipoo* of the *kayanja* which was "bigger than a hippopotamus but not as big as mulongwesi, lived in the lakes of Nyasaland, in the deep parts as at Tundo on Lake Chilwa; was very fierce and killed the hippopotamus; would upset canoes. There are no more *kipoo* but probably three might be." One of my informants, a man of forty, said his father had been told of them by his father, but he had never seen them. At the present time, other natives say that the *mulongwesi* used to live in the lakes but they seem really to refer to *kipoo* and I think lessness of speech only accounts for the idea that the word refers to anything but the whale. Hetherwick translates *mulongwesi* as a large fish figuring in the initiation ceremonies,[1] a poor description, since it always has four limbs. The word *mulongwesi* meaning a whale, occurs among the Mchiwambo people who live at Quilimane. These people do not make any figures on the ground at their circumcision ceremonies but it is interesting to note that their *wali* carry staffs similar to the sponge on their return to the village. I think, therefore, there can be little doubt that the word refers to the whale which was probably well known to the Yao before they migrated so far inland as Nyasaland. Whether the word was adopted or not in these parts in the past and used for some indigenous animal now extinct, one cannot be quite sure, but I think it is improbable; I believe the confusion with *kipoo* is of quite recent date. *Kipoo* itself appears to have been some large mammal of the hippopotamus type, extinct probably for some time. The *ch'ina* of *kipoo* resemble those of the monster of Lake Nyasi and are not without interest. The most weighty evidence against the animal now depicted at the *Utenje* and called *mulongwesi* being a whale, is found in the representations themselves. It has a neck with a knob at the junction of the head with the body and a second knob at the junction of the body, tail and hind limbs; the tail is well marked. The "webbing" between the limbs is, I think, a means of finishing the figure and is not supposed to represent some anatomical feature of the beast. The same is, I think, true of the markings, lines, dots, etc., which are purely decorative. Reference has already been made to its tusks. The little mounds on either side of the body of the animal, on one side within the "webbing," are spoken of as the "little hills" and are not suggested females as one might imagine. The hollows have no significance according to my informants except that they are where the *n'wichila* stands; the mark which looks like a native hoe, I believe, is meant to represent the hoe which has been used in making the figure.

Chiputu, the lake: the photograph in the article by Dr. Davey and myself of *Nyasa*.[2]

[1] Op. cit., p. 305. [2] Op. cit., Pt. III, fig. 2.

[illegible]

of the hut, *chenjitshi*, and the end part of the house of the women, doubtless on account of its shape, are used as medicine for this disease.

Entshinyamo or Nkoko: If a man dies and his relatives eat of the food-stuffs left by him, such as nuts from his grain-store, before they have been cleansed by medicine, they will sicken with edema, the symptoms being anaemia and wasting. The word *kwimba* edema is also used for sickness due to partaking of food cooked by an unfaithful wife.

Chipute is a word used by both Yao and *Anyanja* to denote a disease which a man contracts from adulterous intercourse. Scott[1] derives the word from *ku-puta*, to stick to; the woman is so followed by medicine made by her husband that should any man have adulterous intercourse with her, the disease will "stick" to him, while it will not affect the woman herself nor her own husband. Both the disease and the medicine made to cause the disease are known as *Chipute*. Secondarily, the word has come to be used for any disease which may be gained by sexual intercourse and is sometimes used as a general term for venereal disease.

Chipute cha chipeule (*chipeule*, a knife): A man who is going away from home obtains medicine and destroys his knife with it. As he leaves his house to go on his journey, he pretends just to remember his knife and calls for it. His wife brings it to him and it is put into his sheath; he then goes out and sticks it in the grass of the roof of the house. The medicine is made from the tail of a dog, an animal in which coitus is prolonged and the two animals cannot separate. Should the wife commit adultery, it is supposed that just as the knife was condemned and destroyed with dog medicine, so the adulterous pair will remain fixed in coitu and be found out. This may be called *chipute cha kutuga* (*kutuga* = to set a trap).

The *Anyanja* make medicine with the same idea, *chipute cha kutuwa* (*ku-tuwa*, to set a trap, Chin.); medicine is put round the house and any man crossing the medicine and committing adultery with the wife will be trapped. In all cases, the man will become ill.

Chipute cha mimi, mimi, khosi (*mumi*, Chin.): disease caused by intercourse with a menstruating woman. Blood is passed in the urine.

Chipute cha mmo, mmo, pus (*mafinga*, Chin.): practically means gonorrhoea.

Chipute cha kinyi, kinyi, semen (*ntoja*, Chin.): the discharge from the urethra resembles a thread of cotton; it is supposed that this thread can be pulled out endlessly.

Chipute cha mbendu, mbendu, the white ants (*chiswa*, Chin.): so called when a man passes whitish-yellow debris in the urine. It is supposed that when he has finished passing water, white ants rush up the penis and enter the bladder, thus causing the pain which characterises this affection. The origin of the idea lies in the fact that if one sprinkles water or urine on the ground near white-ant burrows, the ants will come to the surface of the ground in numbers and make a rustling sound.

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[1] D. C. Scott, *A syllabic dictionary of the Mang'anja language*, *op. cit.*

Other hypothetical diseases which are caused by disobedience to customs are mentioned under various other headings. *Kanjoo*: a disease generally characterized by ulceration of the legs but in some cases by pains in the back, or loosely used for a variety of symptoms, is said to be caused by the entry into the body of a worm which lives in water-pools. This worm which I have had identified is a gordian worm and not known to be parasitic in man. *Lumi*: When a man kills another in battle, he will sit upon the belly of his victim; otherwise he believes he will sicken with lumi and his own belly will swell up like that of the corpse whose putrefaction sets in. He is supposed also to hunger after more killing and blood. *Lilungu* is the name of a supposed disease which kills off one child after another in a family when they are about six months old. Congenital syphilis naturally suggests itself but I have never been able to verify this idea. *Lilungu lya kutula*: a supposed disease which causes the death of the first child when the second is born, the second when the third is born and so on, whatever the intervals between the births. Each child is said to push (*ku-tula*) the previous one out of this world. Under these circumstances the disease is ascribed to something wrong with the mother or father and they are examined by a medicine-woman or medicine-man, and any curcurbitae or an external pile found will be cut away.

If a snake inflicts two bites, the case will prove fatal. If a crocodile emits a grunting sound when seizing its victim, though he escape he will certainly die.

Treatment of diseases. Of surgical treatment there is very little to be noted. Nothing in the way of operation is performed with the exception of circumcision (see *Legends*).

An abscess is allowed to burst, the smallest tumor is left untouched, but accessory digits which are not rare, attached only by a fine pedicle, are snipped off.

The natives cannot extract teeth. They are incapable of rendering any assistance in cases of difficult labor. Dislocations are not recognized as such, but fractures are treated by the application of wooden sticks placed at intervals round the circumference of the limb parallel to it and held in position by twisted pieces of bark string (Pl. XXII, fig. 2). The principle of the tourniquet appears to be unknown.

The only instruments used consist of a small knife for incision, a cupping-horn, and a primitive form of funnel for administering enemata (Pl. XXII, figs. 1, 2, 4). The knife has a triangular blade with a stem which is commonly twisted at one of the corners. The knife is used for wet-cupping, tattooing, and circumcision (Pl. XXII, fig. 2). The cupping-horn is a small horn of a calf. The apex is pierced and after application to the part, suction is made with the mouth and then the hole sealed by working a piece of beeswax over it with the tongue. Six small incisions are made in the skin for the withdrawal of the blood. The cupping-horn is called *chuni* (*tshuwiko*, Chin.). Cupping is used for headache and for pain in the chest and back. The enema funnel, *chipelpo* (*ntimbiri*, Chin.) is made from the neck of a gourd to which is attached a hollow straw for introduction into the anus. Half a pint of an infusion of *mwpoto* is injected for constipation associated with pain.

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Again, charm medicine may be contained in various articles which are also generally worn round the neck. The teeth and claws of the beasts of prey are so employed, generally arranged in pairs bound together so as to form a crescent and suspended from a string. The teeth of crocodiles, lions, leopards, and the claws of the same beasts and of some large birds of prey are thus employed. The teeth etc., are in themselves charms against injury, probably against what one might call homœopathic injury. The idea of stuffing them with medicine is probably a secondary consideration, a process of fortification of the charm so that he can cause to have a more powerful influence. It is interesting to see of late years that the natives, recognizing the decorative value of these crescent-shaped amulets, has begun to copy them in lead and ivory. A series of these of graduated size is worn as a necklace by women.

When a medicine-man is consulted, part payment is made in advance, "payment to go and dig medicine (roots)." The rest of the payment is made when the cure is effected. Should a patient not be satisfied with his treatment and wish to consult some other medicine-man, he pays to the first a quarter of the fee he would have paid if his cure had been effected; this is called "paying him to get his medicine away." Unless this is done, should he recover later, he will be liable to claims for full fees from all of the medicine-men he has consulted; each will say his own medicine has gone on acting and has effected the cure. A medicine-man may take a man he is treating into his own house.

In prescribing medicine, very particular instructions are given with an embargo on certain things which may or may not have some use and significance. A medicine-man in 1901 at Malemya's, who inoculated every one in the farmhead with buffet proof medicine, said that no one must step across a *mwiri* (pestle for pounding grain), and no one must eat the leaves of the sweet potato.

A medicine-man always partakes of part of the decoction he is giving to a patient to show that it is harmless; I think these preparations are mostly inactive. I should hate to sample all the castor oil I have prescribed, though many natives have had suspicions about me when I have not done so.

Poisons. Though there are a large number of species in this country, both vegetable and animal, from which poison might be extracted, those that have gained any reputation among natives and have come under my observation are but few in number. *Muavi* (*Mwabvi* Chin.) "the ordeal poison," is the bark of *Erythrophlœum guineense*. The natives distinguish two varieties of *muavi*, the two trees differing slightly in leaf, flower and bark; *muavi* is the *Erythrophlœum guineense*, the second variety known as *mpevazile* is doubtless an allied species. *Muavi* is the poison employed in the poison ordeal.[1] It is administered in a poisonous dose as a decoction of the bark, recovery or otherwise depending on whether or not the poison is voided by vomiting. Natives give as the symptoms headache, giddiness, disturbance of vision, vomiting and purging, with slowing of heart beat. *Mpe-*

[1] Vide infra, p. 398.

The father of one of my servants helped to clear out the remains of a body from his grain store on one occasion and shortly afterwards, it is supposed that his own sons who had said they could not allow it to go on any longer, employed some one to kill him, as he was found, one day, with his head smashed in. There are, I believe, a number of similar cases known.

A person is supposed to gain the powers of witaoi by procuring medicine from some one willing to sell his secrets at a price, and by performing certain rites usually connected with the method of learning. It is said that "such and such a one takes his bath on the top of an ant hill" or "on the roof of his house by moonlight." The witaoi initiation into witaoi is a long business, the individual being successively initiated into all the various practices of witaoism, the supernatural. Medicines are made from a still-born child, from various plants, from the hyaena, etc., and used for preparing the individual in the new witaoism. He is introduced to the hyaena, the fox, etc. It is also asserted that a man may acquire supernatural powers by having sexual intercourse with a near relative, a sister or mother. I have had pointed out to me an old man who is said to have wished thus to acquire power but the women refused and he has been a laughing-stock ever since.

On one occasion, a man related to me the pathetic life story of his attempt to find his favorite sister who, like himself, had been taken away to the coast as a slave. In desperation he has adopted the above procedure to try to gain supernatural powers to help him but without result. It would therefore seem to be a method not particularly associated with witaoi.

The witaoi is supposed to bring about the death of his victim not by administering poison or other such direct means, but by the more subtle mode of making medicine "against" him. When the victim has succumbed and is in due course buried, the witaoi arrives at the grave to secure that for which he has been working. To the witaoi is attributed the power of making himself invisible, and of taking the form of an animal; owing to the carrion-eating habits of the hyaena, this animal form is most commonly taken. Other animal forms which are associated with the witaoi are the leopard, the fox, and the owl, all night-going animals. The Yao say, "The cry of the fox (achui) is heard at night because he associates with witaoi doings."

Arrived at the grave after sunset, the witaoi blows his horn, the horn of a small antelope, to call his brethren; a fire with a blue flame is made by the grave and around it they dance, or the grave may be illuminated by blue flame without a visible fire. The witaoi calls upon the deceased to rise from the grave, addressing him by the name he bore before he was initiated, i.e. his child-name. Obeying the summons, the dead man rises to the surface of the ground, though how he comes out is not quite clear — "the hole may be over so small." The risen dead is then killed again by magic medicine and his body divided to be eaten by the congregation of witaoi. It is said that the skull is made into a gourd, the eyes are used as beads, and the ribs formed into a girdle.

Thagidugu was another well-known gentleman; he used to do the same tricks as Kuwa-lenje. He also was possessed of an elastic skin and he said to have been able " to do his own together behind the back of his head."

Mjandutsila, a Tree of Mikanda, is a man with considerable resources. He is said to be able to produce a lion at will from a lion's tail and claw. He would offer to show this if there were any lions enough to go through with it. On a moonlight night, he would organize on the ground in a cleared space near a village the tail of a lion held some-what in a piece of split bamboo. At the split end of the bamboo, he would place a lion's claw and round this, a woman's hair braid in position by three bamboo pegs, around which he would draw a circle of coloured flour. Everyone would then withdraw to a hut in which the women was to take place. After an hour or so, Mjandutsila would send some one out to inspect the lion's tail where probably all would be found intact. He might then proceed to be entertained and sleepy and suggest that some one should go out again in half an hour. Sooner or later, a man would come back, having found the tail gone; then everyone would go out to see what had happened. The page would be found in place but the tail and claw gone. A little way off, the split piece of bamboo would be found and further still a braid or two from the woman's hair. Then, Mjandutsila would pick up, and leaving a little trail of flour on their way, all returned to the hut, while he whistled as if calling some one. Suddenly they would be arrested by the sound as of a lion breaking against the hut walls, as the beasts are known to do, and next, a loud roar. Mjandutsila would immediately open the door half-way so that the people could look out into the moonlight and there, a little way off, would be the lion. It would immediately advance towards the house and then, as it prepared to spring for the door, Mjandutsila would offer it some of the flour in his left hand, armed with a stirring-stick, native, in his right hand. As the lion landed, he would strike it on the head with the stick and lo and behold! the lion would vanish and the tail and claw would be found in his hand.

Superstitions. Scattered throughout these notes, particularly under Omen and Disease, mention is made of practices which show a strong belief in superstition. Below are given a number of minor beliefs, and it is interesting to compare them with many well-known superstitions in other parts of the world.

1. A child who cuts the upper incisor teeth first will be unlucky. Such children used to be killed by the Yao. (Other tribes make medicine against the threatened ill-luck.)

2. A woman with polydactylism may not take food out of a cave-stove. Otherwise the stock of corn will not last long. (Rudimentary sixth fingers are not uncommon.)

3. An insect called *chinjeme mwi* which lives in the mud at the bottom of pools, if killed causes the water to dry up.

4. If a boy puts a water-spider in the armpit when learning to swim, he will learn quickly.

5. A man wishing to prevent rain falling on a day he is making a journey, will wrap some of the leaves of the *mimosoni* tree in his loin cloth and go without drinking.

18. That portion of the gut of animals having bits of coarse membrane inside, may be eaten only by old people past the child-propagating age. If a young woman should eat it, she would have difficulty in labor.

19. It is believed that people who eat too freely of a little fish like sardines called matemba get obstruction of the bowel by the wedging together of the bones. The treatment adopted is to pass up the rectum a smooth stick with a pad of rag at the end. This cannot be done by the person himself and as the aid of another has to be called in, only an intimacy, such as the relationship of brother-in-law gives, will warrant this service being asked.

20. The Yao believe that there is a little insect which lives in the ear, called chiquwe kyelingalo, which tells the person what is said to him, the ear being its conveyance. The pupil is called mwanasho jwa liso, the child of the eye.

21. Among women, the uterus is called mwana (mwa = eyes). It is supposed to be a little person who holds the foetus. When the child is born, nervous women feel it and starts looking about, the nervousness causing the afterpains.

22. A man making his first journey to the coast used to sprinkle himself with water from every stream he crossed to give him a safe journey. In the same way, women on the present day going between Kondo and Shariyaw sprinkle their babies with water from each stream.

24. An ant-like insect called mkpatamaka (mwakatamaka, Chin.) [daughters-marrying] is lucky. On seeing it a native puts his belly and then rubs his ears, wishing for plenty of food that day. If he is embarking on a journey or beginning some enterprise, he will wrap one of these insects in a fold of his bale cloth and take it with him for luck.

25. When a native hears the mwipe bird call (its call is like the mew of a cat), if he wants something, he immediately says, "Oh, mwipe, I want so-and-so. Be quiet and I will then be quiet, too!" If the bird ceases calling, he knows the wish will be granted. The female bird is said to be the more certain prophet.

26. The mulio, mdolobolozi, which lives in trees and is of a buff clay color with green markings, is said by natives to pierce the chest and tie a knot in itself on each side so that it can only be withdrawn by cutting off one knot. When the snake is thus withdrawn, its blood mixes with that of the man and he will die.

27. Natives have a habit of marking the spot where any event takes place by a stone by the side of the path, and every passer-by will add a stone for luck. In this way some large piles of stones have been made.

28. A man resting on his way home from a long journey places a stone in the fork between the branches of a nearby tree, so that on his arrival he may find his wife has put by some food for him and has not used up the day's stock of flour.

29. A shameless friend digging in the path is said to presage the death of the father's nearest relative.

30. If a chameleon is found holding on to the grass at both sides of the path, the path is "closed" and a man will turn back to his house and not proceed on his journey. It would be unlucky to continue.

31. Snakes seen in webs are a bad omen.

32. The slow-worm known as *Mamboia mungulu* ("the snitter upon of our hills"), and the only scincoid, if seen on the path, are of bad import.

33. To knock the toes against a stone on a journey is bad luck; if blood flows from the big toe, it points to good luck.

34. A man trembling the sole of his foot against a stone knows that some one is speaking ill of him.

35. A person whose hands itch knows he will receive a present.

36. Tremor of the circumorbital muscles of the right eye indicates that something good will be seen. When the left eye is affected, the outcome is less sure.

37. The cry of the bird *nyakalala* (the green turaco), indicates to the hearer that he is about to meet some one, either friend or enemy.

38. Anyone who kills one of the large stink-insects (*Pharsnidae*) knows no children shall, will always be breaking the cooking pots afterwards.

39. The natives believe that the caterpillar of the Egyptian cotris moth will jump at the breast. It is called *chisumbila mumulu*, "dust which jumps at the breasts," and children seeing it will cover up their nipples with their hands.

40. *Of Lizards*, the Mangoroo, there is a saying:

"*Lizalu pepeshelenyeo ushila*"

"The hundred mangoroos relieve each other (at) the wood"

It is said that mangoroos assist one another when being hunted. When one is tired, a fresh one runs in to show to the pursuer that he goes after this one and leaves the tired one, and so they keep it up till the pursuer is exhausted.

41. *Chiula*, the frog. Children are told they must never kill a frog, or its spirit will come at night with porridge made of excrement and make them eat it. If a small child playing with a frog kills it by mischance, he will tear off a small piece of his native cloth and place it by the frog as an offering.

42. *Chindindi* (Kimpoo, Chis.) the weasel. It is said that the weasel hides its body and leaves exposed its nose, so that a chicken seeing it, goes up to peck at it, whereupon the weasel turns round quickly and catches the chicken with its mouth.

43. *Chingwe*, the skunk (from *kwenga*, to go to steal), so named on account of its odor, is said to apply the nose to a rat-hole and make wind. This will render inhabitable all the rats in the burrow and he can then dig them out at leisure.

44. *Mbuli*, the honey badger, when hunted is always said to attack a man by attempting to seize the testicles. Natives when they hunt this animal, tie stones in their loin clothes so that they hang down between the legs to defeat the badger.

setting out on a journey may ask the intercession of his deceased father to ensure his safe conduct.

The spirits of the dead are in general said to dwell "above." They haunt the graveyard or visit the scenes of their life, and may be associated with natural objects or with certain animals, into which they are supposed to enter temporarily. Thus a dead man's spirit will visit the earth mound which marks the site of his old house in the village. The spirits of headmen are often thought to haunt the big trees of the village open space; such trees are held sacred for this reason. Some time ago in the old village of the chief, Malenya, a party of women cut down one of these trees for firewood, ignorant of its sacred character. With the crash of the falling tree, they became frightened, and one of the present Malenya's wives came upon the scene, predicting all kinds of evil to follow unless reparation were made to the insulted spirits of the dead chiefs. The remains of the tree lie there to this day, untouched except by natural decay.

To quote another example, near a bathing pool called *japanali* (from *ku-jipa*, to bathe, and *wali*, the initiates) where boys bathe after initiation, on the Dzenzi river, there is a small cataract whence a cloud of spray rises and a continued rumbling sound comes forth. Here, the old men say, you can hear the drumming of the spirits, while you may see pythons and the crowing cobra in whose bodies the spirits live.

As I have already mentioned, the spirit-world so far as the native has speculated on the problem is "above" in a semi-materialistic heaven. If questioned closely, the phrase "I do not know" will figure largely in his replies. He will not say there is any "marriage or giving in marriage." If a child dies, they often say, "So-and-so (some deceased person) wants a water-carrier." Indeed they often use a phrase under the circumstances identical with an English expression, "They are calling away the children."

Natives attribute to the spirits of the dead the power to partake of anything on this earth, such as food. They have no exact ideas with regard to animals and what happens to them when they die. They will not tell you that an animal has an essence but at the same time, a goat is often killed at a funeral, with the remark, "The goat will follow the dead man." The goat's meat will be eaten by those assisting at the funeral; hence there is the suggestion of the idea that animals' spirits do go to the spirit-world.

In referring to the spirit-world, the native generally uses the word *ku-mulungu*, and here we have the second element in their religious beliefs, namely a supreme being; *ku-mulungu* means *at the place of* or *with mulungu*, the supreme being. *Mulungu*, however, takes a very secondary place to the *mizimu*. He is referred to only in a general way. In answer to such questions as why has a woman an albino child born to her, she will say "*Mulungu* made it so"; in fact in reply to many questions to which the native has no answer, he will use practically our English phrase, "Oh, God knows!" and with about as much meaning.

To *Mulungu* is ascribed the sending of the rain, but apparently he has no part in giving good crops or causing a plentiful harvest, neither has he any direct interest in man's affairs,

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824 778 be supposed to live in such trees. They are convenient natural objects for them to occupy, in fact practically the only ones to be found in villages. Trees may secondarily, therefore, be looked upon as in some degree sacred. About such trees strings or pieces of calico may be placed as an offering to the spirits of the departed. But the Yao do not erect little huts in their vicinity, hung about with strips of calico as is the custom among the Anyanja.

775 Macdonald[1] mentions the spirits in connection with Soche and other hills round Blantyre and supposes them to be the spirits of the places themselves. This I think is unlikely; they would probably turn out to be spirits bearing the names of long departed Anyanja chiefs whom the immigrant Amangoche Yao venerated just "to be on the safe side," since they had come and taken the country which long ago belonged to the former tribe. When approaching or passing any spot held to be the dwelling place of spirits, salutation is made by clapping the hands.

Spirits of the departed may enter into animals or may take the form of animals, [825] commonly lions and sometimes large snakes (python), but this belief is not so general among the Yao as among other tribes, in my opinion. An animal which is so possessed is called *lisyuka*, from *ku-syuka*, "to be transformed."

[774] Apart from this habitation of inanimate objects above mentioned by *msimu*, there is nothing that points to a belief in Animism among the Yao, so far as I know. Neither hills, rocks, streams, lakes, nor trees have their own spirits, nor are they endowed by the native mind with life.

Deceased persons appear to the living in dreams, the native apparently believing that the deceased appears in his material body.

775 787 791 They believe also in revelation of wishes of the deceased through the medium of the living. The spirit of the deceased is supposed to enter into the medium. The medium, I am informed, is always a woman, never a man. From the descriptions of some of these revelation séances, there can be no doubt that they are manifestations of *la grande hystérie*. The medium works herself up into a frenzy of excitement and in her delirium gives out the name of the deceased, the voice which speaks being that of the spirit within her. She rolls on the ground and foams at the mouth, uttering the word of revelation which is generally to the effect that some deceased chief's spirit is feeling aggrieved at the neglect of his tomb; the voice may go on to say that certain practices are forbidden, or demand that certain rites be observed by the people. The spirits which possess her are generally spoken of as *wasoka*, a word which, though sometimes used as equivalent to *msimu*, usually seems to [158] have rather a sinister significance. Insane persons are called *wasoka* and are thought to be possessed by a spirit, and vapor baths with exorcism may be practiced for their cure. In the case of the death of anyone who is possessed, in answer to my interrogation, I have [761] been told that both the spirit which has entered into the man and his own *msimu* leave his body.

[1] Op. cit., vol. I, p. 70.

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40. *Gonera kwala ntabuta!*
Lying on the rock, heat!

This is a slang expression which in full would read, "It is nice and warm lying on a rock in the sun, but it is not so comfortable as being in bed in company with your wife; you can go on waiting but you won't get anything." This might even be said to a dog, watching as a dog will, every morsel of food lifted to its master's mouth.

41. *Kulupikila mesi pa mbiru!*
To have hopes of water for maggots!

It is a custom before lying down to sleep on the floor mat, to take it up and pour boiling water on the earth floor to kill any blood-sucking maggots (Congo floor-maggot, *Asclmeromyia*). If you see a pot cooking on the fire, you naturally think there is food being prepared but you may be disappointed; it may only be the pot for heating the water to kill the maggots. The saying is thus used to a man who has made an assignation and is disappointed but goes on waiting.

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42. *Kulumu upuu!*
To bite cockroach-like!

The cockroach is described by natives as going up to what it will eat, remaining quiet for some moments, and then suddenly taking a bite. This is said of a man who comes up to you smiling and then hits you a hard blow.

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Among the Yao as among other tribes that I have previously mentioned,[1] signs of salutation to a superior are made by clapping the hands or patting the breast or buttock with one hand, at the same time crouching down. A woman will go off the path and kneel, looking away from a superior passing along the roadway.

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A person going by the door of a hut where others are sitting, will say "*Kumlango hano!* At the door here." Passing behind anyone, he will say "*Ku-nyu'ma!* At the back!" Meeting anyone on a path, a man will simply say, "*Iche*, here," adding perhaps, "*Ku-chela!* all is well!" A chief or headman on returning to his village after a journey, is greeted by the women with trilling of the tongue (*Ku-lulula*).

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Man and wife do not greet each other in the morning. The wife rises first and draws water and places it in the hut for the husband's use but nothing may be said.

When a visitor is entertained and a chicken cooked for a repast, the "pope's nose" is always for the visitor. The right hand only is used in dipping into the common pot. A man of small importance, though replete, will go on making pretence of eating at a common meal by taking very small amounts so that his superior shall finish first, and rise and go away before him.

I may here add the words used by the Yao for the sounds made by various animals; they are interesting to compare with those of other languages:

[1] 'Notes on some tribes of British Central Africa,' op. cit., p. 261-262.

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no one will touch. With the exception of carrion birds such as the crow and the hawk, most birds are considered fit to eat. The hornbill is not eaten, as it is supposed to carry part of a corpse on its nose.[1] Fowls form a regular article of diet, but some taboos in this connection are mentioned elsewhere.

Eggs are eaten only by children and old people; that is, by those outside the child propagating age. Milk is never consumed in any form. They say, "What a disgusting habit, to suck the juice of an animal while it is still alive!"

Pregnant women will not eat certain things lest the child be born with some deformity, such as the snout of a pig, or the white stripes of a zebra.

Art and decoration. Sculpture can hardly be said to be an art known to the Yao. The only piece of stone work I have ever seen was a granite boulder, on the surface of which cup-holes had been made for the game of *Bao* (Pl. IV, fig. 4).

Of late years, individuals here and there have begun carving wooden figures of men and animals. The Yao, of course, make no idols. It is uncertain exactly how long it is since any of these people started producing wooden figures. I should think that this art has sprung up within the past twelve or thirteen years, that is to say, since there has been a market for them among European residents. In the first place only natives and some of the common animals, the eland and leopard, were represented; since then, many animals and Europeans have been copied. The native is extraordinarily clever in reproducing characteristic features in dress, etc., so that a Portuguese is easily distinguished from an Englishman. The little models in ivory of animals and native household objects, made by the Swahili people on Lake Nyasa, have never been copied by the Yao. Neither do they make clay images of men and cattle as do the Zulu-descended Angoni and cattle-keeping Wankonde. No native would allow any wooden figure to remain in his house for fear of ill luck; the women especially would look askance at them, fearing some misfortune in their next pregnancy. Little wooden figures of birds, however, are sometimes seen affixed to the point of the hut roof.

The making of carved figures, then, is of recent introduction, or rather is a recent event in the evolution of the Yao, as they were not taught but self-inspired in the work.

The ability to make representations of objects by drawing appears in the same way to originate spontaneously here and there as a sport. Natives with a talent for drawing are found among all the tribes, and among the Yao, it is said, there have always been some who have been able to draw. Naturally enough, their reproductions are made on the walls of their houses, and their subjects are generally animals of the forest, sometimes men and houses, or some other object of particular interest[2] (Pl. VIII, fig. 1). I also give sketches of some other drawings I have noted (Pl. XVIII); the line figure of a man at Makanjila's

[1] Vide supra, p. 327.

[2] Cf. A. Werner, 'A Native Painting from Nyasaland,' (Jour. Afric. Soc., London 1909, vol. 8, no. 30, p. 180-182).

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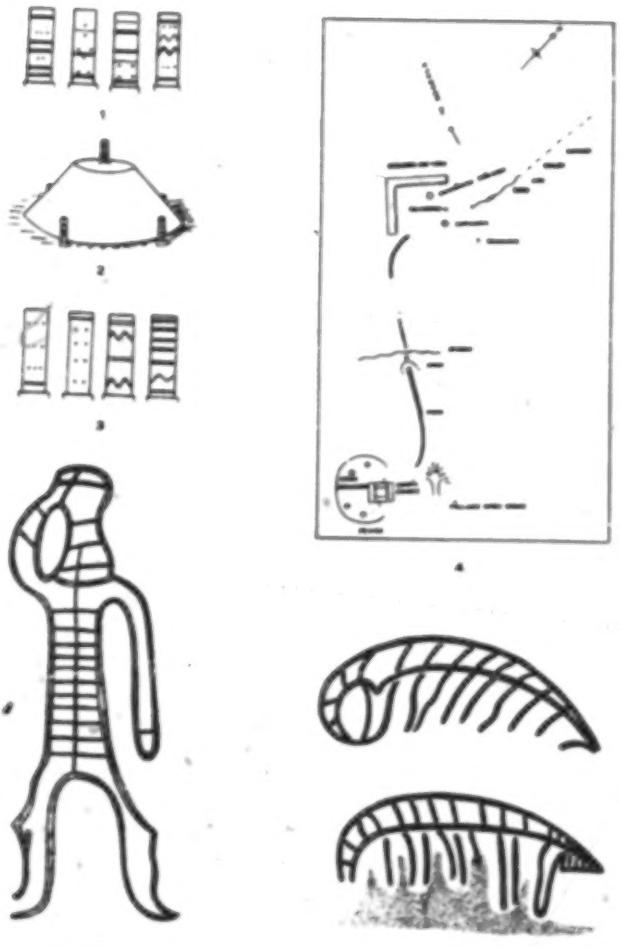

1-5. [illegible]. 6. [illegible]. 7. [illegible]. 8-9. [illegible]

[End Plate 10]
[Explanation of plates, cat. 116, p. 265]

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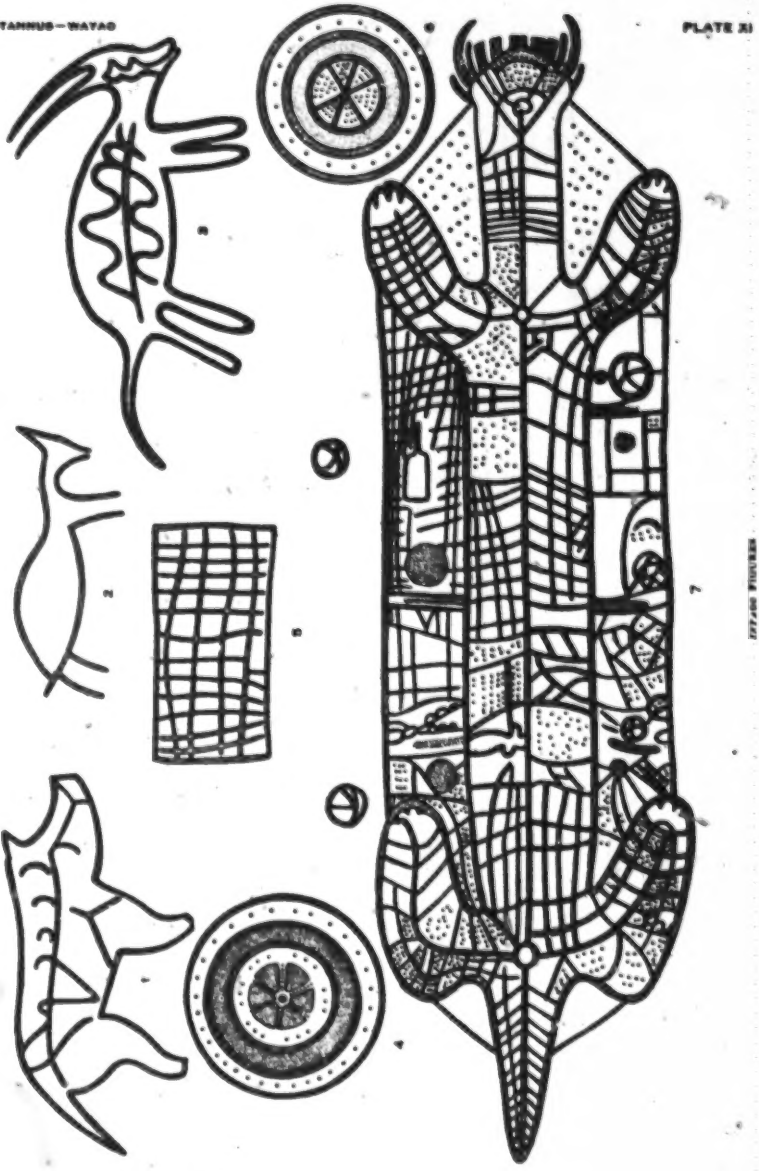

[End Plate 1L]

[For Plate Explanation, see cat. 116, p. 265]

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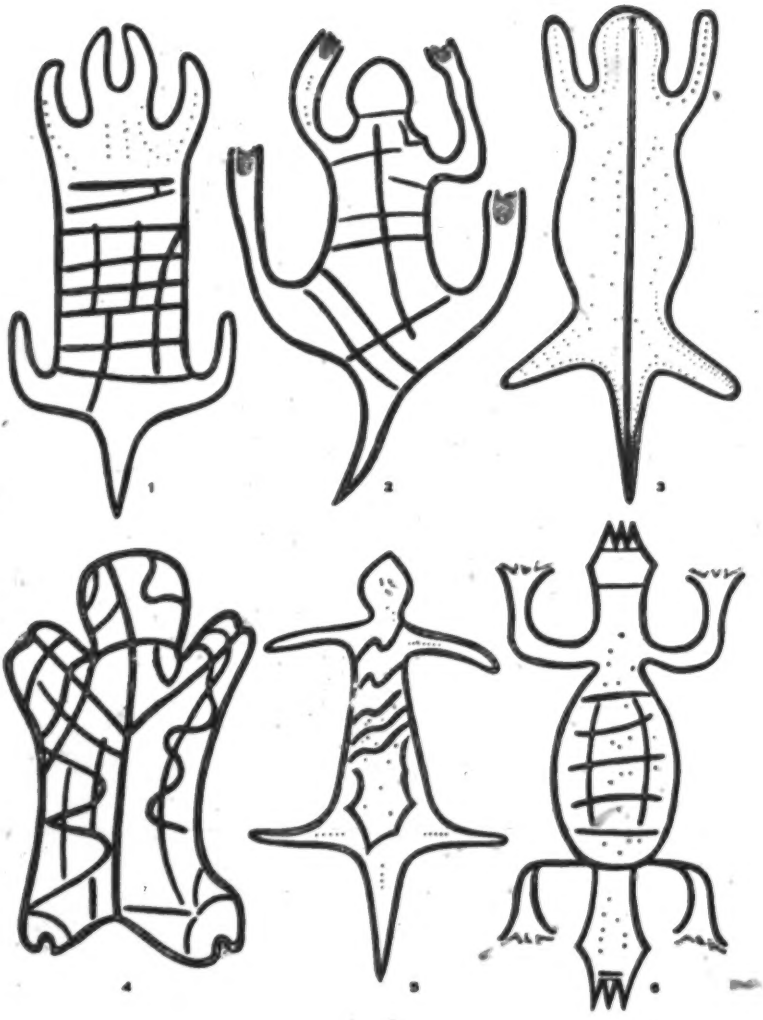

[End Plate 12]
[For explanation, see cat. 116, p. 265]

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[End Plate 13]

[For explanation, see cat. 116, p. 265]